



City of Seattle

Greg Nickels, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Diane Sugimura, Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UD&P Committee
Councilmember Richard Conlin
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

FROM: Diane M. Sugimura

DATE: March 3, 2005

SUBJECT: Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Update for March 9, 2005

Workload Characteristics for Land Use Review

Last month we reported on the increased permitting activity in 2004 compared with 2003. Permitting activity in early 2005 continues to be robust. In January 2005, Land Use continued to see an increase in MUP applications, a 56% increase over January 2004 (53 applications in 2004, compared with 83 in 2005). Platting actions (lot boundary adjustments, short plats and unit lot short plats) continue to make up 45% of the MUP application activity. These are generally related to single family homes and townhouse development.

In January 2005, we received 17 design review applications compared to 6 in January 2004. This increase has been sustained so far in February and likely to increase with High Point Administrative Design Review ramping up. The busiest Boards are Capitol Hill, Northeast, and Downtown. The Southeast board has also been busy.

Production Goals

We are focusing on the backlog of decisions in land use review. We are publishing a record number of decisions. Last January, we published 38 decisions compared to 56 in 2005, a 47% increase. February looks to be even better with both an increase in the number of decisions and more within the 120 day goal.

On-line Electrical Permits

A little less than a month ago, DPD successfully launched Seattle's first fully automated on-line permit service. Permit applicants can now apply for and receive selected types of electrical permits (those that do not require plan review) without making a trip downtown. These represent DPD's largest volume of permits, potentially 12,000 permits per year. The new service allows applicants to apply and pay for permits online using a credit card or an escrow (advance deposit) account. Permits are self-issued and can be viewed and printed from a web browser. Of the approximately 950 permits issued since go-live, almost a quarter (227) were issued on-line.

Greenlake Guest House

We recently issued a decision upholding the violation notice concerning this bed and breakfast. The decision was limited to the issue of whether a violation exists because the house had been remodeled to accommodate a bed and breakfast use. The remodeling that was done was found to be in direct conflict with a provision of the recent bed and breakfast ordinance that specifically does not allow a B&B in a single family zone when exterior structural alterations are needed or made to accommodate the B&B. A suit has been filed.

Land Use Policy and Code Development

Shaping Downtown Seattle: We continue to work on the code amendments, and final details of the proposal. Issues are primarily related to details, rather than the basic concept of height or density increases ... historic preservation, open space and pedestrian amenities, sustainability, and tower spacing. We hope to have legislation to Council by early April.

Neighborhood Business District Strategy: We are preparing the final language and will have the text complete and SEPA review ready for publication before the end of March

Environmentally Critical Areas: The public meeting was held February 24. We have also met separately with environmental groups and Master Builders. We will be working with these groups to help us reach the right balance between environmental protection and allowing growth under GMA. Our goal is to have legislation to Council in May.

Shoreline Mitigation Plan: We are preparing a comprehensive mitigation plan for shoreline improvements along the Ship Canal and Lake Union. The goal is to allow individual property owners to pay into a mitigation fund, rather than make improvements on a lot by lot basis. We've had some early focus group discussions with stakeholders; an advisory group will soon be established.

South Lake Union: We are working with the UW's NW Center for Livable Communities. A graduate student studio is preparing background information about the neighborhood, and current and planned activities; talking to the neighborhood; and acting

as a consultant to DPD. This is in preparation for a SLU Urban Center Plan, as required by the County Planning Policies when a new Urban Center is designated.

Public Outreach and Hearings

- March 8 Northgate Community Forum
- March 9 Council Hearing, South Lake Union Zoning and Design Guidelines
- March 18 Svend Auken, former Danish Minister of Energy and Environment
- March 21 Congressman Jay Inslee and Tony Usibelli, CTED, will moderate the Energy and Economic Development Forum with regional energy leaders, featuring Svend Auken
- March 23 Council Hearing, Single Family Non-conformity
- March 30 Council Hearing, University District/Capitol Hill/Pike-Pine/First Hill Parking

Attachment: Monthly Housing Stats

NEW RESIDENTIAL UNITS AUTHORIZED BY BUILDING PERMIT

